

# ECRI

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance  
Commission européenne contre le racisme et l'intolérance

## ECRI's Round Table in the Russian Federation

Conference Hall of the International Federation for Peace and Conciliation  
Moscow, 23 September 2008

### EXPLANATORY NOTE

Russian version (pdf)

ECRI's Round Table in the Russian Federation is part of a series of national round tables in the member States of the Council of Europe, which are organised by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe in the framework of its Programme of action on relations with civil society.

These national round tables are regularly organised following the publication of ECRI's country monitoring reports, in which ECRI thoroughly analyses the situation as regards racism and intolerance in each country and makes suggestions and proposals as to how to tackle the problems identified.

The main aim of these round tables is to encourage reflection in the governmental and non-governmental circles concerned, by bringing together the relevant national actors in this field, including government officials, representatives of national human rights institutions, representatives of local and regional authorities, parliamentarians, victims of discrimination, academics, NGOs etc. The objective is to develop together ideas as to how to solve the problems of racism in the country and to ensure the implementation of ECRI's specific recommendations.

The main themes of ECRI's Round Table in the Russian Federation are: (1) ECRI's report on the Russian Federation; (2) racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance in public discourse and in the public sphere; (3) racist violence in the Russian Federation; and (4) the legislative and institutional framework for combating racism and racial discrimination.

In its [third Report on the Russian Federation](#), ECRI acknowledges that in recent years, the Russian Federation has made progress in a number of the fields covered in this report. For example, the criminal law provisions aimed at combating racial discrimination, racism and extremism were reinforced and there were prosecutions of hate speech. Furthermore, certain measures were taken to promote tolerance and to encourage interethnic dialogue.

At the same time, ECRI is concerned that the criminal law provisions aimed at combating racism are not adequately implemented, particularly because the racist motive of an offence is not taken sufficiently into account. Problems still persist with the regularisation of the legal status of non-citizens and the situation of asylum seekers and refugees remains precarious. ECRI is also concerned about working conditions of

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immigrant workers, notably from CIS countries, and about certain problems of racial discrimination, particularly in education, access to public services and employment. Furthermore, ECRI notes that there has been a rise in racial violence, racist expression and antisemitic acts as well as an increase in use of racist and xenophobic discourse in politics. Finally, ECRI is concerned about numerous instances of racial discrimination in the residence registration system and about the system itself, which has a negative impact on the basic rights of visible minorities throughout the country.

All of these issues will be discussed with representatives of the responsible governmental agencies and victims of discrimination in the light of the **existing legislative and institutional framework for combating racism and racial discrimination** in the Russian Federation. A whole session will deal with the question as to how best to respond to **racist incidents**, with a special emphasis on the **role of the criminal justice system** in this regard. Finally, also the **dangers of racism and xenophobia in the public discourse and in the public sphere** will be analysed in more detail by renowned experts in this field.

ECRI hopes that an open debate among all relevant actors on these important issues will help to identify together effective ways of better implementing existing initiatives and will also provide the necessary impetus for further reform in the Russian Federation.